

### **7.5.6 Capacity/Organizational Profile**

Reading Education for Adult Development (READ) of Chattanooga, Inc. is Tennessee's oldest non-profit literacy agency serving adults (Appendix I). READ was originally founded in 1959 as C.A.L.M., the Chattanooga Area Literacy Movement, and later changed its name to more accurately reflect the nature of its business. READ has been meeting Chattanooga's changing literacy needs for 45 years, averaging about 700 to 800 students a year. From 1997 to 2004, 7,007 students have enrolled at READ.

In 2003 READ adopted an ambitious strategic plan (Appendix I) to expand its literacy education mission in Greater Chattanooga. READ, whose mission is to teach, promote and partner to insure that Chattanooga reads, is one of two organizations in this area that provides a full range of literacy services. Chattanooga State is the other. However, according to the 2004 Reading in Hamilton County report approximately 36,650 adults in Hamilton County are estimated to be at the lowest level of literacy (SETNIS 2004). A growing number of Hamilton Co. residents come to READ for Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes in reading, writing, spelling, and math, to prepare for a General Education Diploma (GED) and to learn English as a Second Language (ESL). All classes are free to students. Curriculums are designed to educate 1) adults needing the most basic educational skills, 2) more advanced adults wanting to obtain a diploma or seek better employment, and 3) children and young people referred by school principals.

As an accredited site of the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, READ is continuously evaluated through personal visits and telephone consultations by the area supervisor and annual assessments by State reviewers. This systematic review process includes curriculum, testing, evaluation, and outcomes for all study areas in the comprehensive curriculum. Funding is dependent upon results that meet challenging federal outcome requirements. READ is a United Way of Greater Chattanooga agency. To receive funding from United Way, READ participates in a strenuous allocation process to review organizational structure, program and finance every three years. The most recent review was August 2004.

Collaboration is key to the successful fulfillment of READ's mission. READ and Chattanooga State share both resources and information through the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development grant. READ is an advocate for community-wide collaborations and strives to insure that all adults can have access to the education necessary to give them both opportunity and hope for a better tomorrow. To do this, READ has four goals: 1) to maintain an Academy of Excellence that serves adults that serves adults, primarily, those with the most basic educational needs, in reading, writing, spelling and math; 2) create greater access to basic education through the establishment of Neighborhood and Workplace Classrooms in the areas of greatest need; 3) become advocates for literacy awareness and our expansion of ABE classes for the thousands trapped in lives of little prosperity and even less hope; and 4) fundamentally strengthen an active Board of Directors for the primary purposes of advocacy, fund development, strategic planning, marketing and finance.

READ depends upon referrals from many community agencies (Appendix I). As a founding partner in the Literacy Coalition of Chattanooga READ is committed to sharing information, creating a registry of area literacy providers, and providing consistency in class time availability among adult literacy providers.

READ's immediate goal is to provide ABE to all that need literacy improvement, including adults with learning disabilities and other disadvantages. The ABE program uses the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) to assess students upon program entry and at 12-week intervals. Academic measurement is based on an ABE curriculum for students at a Kindergarten to 6<sup>th</sup> grade level and a 6-level Pre-GED math and writing curricula for students at levels 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. GED pre-testing is every Tuesday at 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. and every Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday evening from 6 to 7:30 p.m. ESL classes are held 4 days a week and serve students at all levels. One-on-one tutoring is offered all day Monday to Thursday. Neighborhood Classrooms offer ABE, GED prep and ESL as determined by the individual needs of the students. READ teaches basic reading instruction for children and youth using the

Read America, Phono-Graphix method as primary intervention. As needed, READ offers a 6-week basic computer skills class for an assisted study curriculum.

Because the majority of READ students are generally reluctant to take the first step towards adult education, READ relies heavily on professional staff and volunteers to respond to walk-in clientele with compassion and encouragement. READ Staff includes two full-time and 11 part-time employees (Appendix C). The management team consists of an Executive Director (Appendix A), Director of Administration (Appendix D), Director of Development (Appendix D) and Dean of Students (Appendix D). Nine certified part-time teachers report to the Dean of Students. One part-time teacher assists the Director of Development in tracking student enrollment. The Dean of Students and each teacher has a four-year college degree as well as a variety of educational and life experiences that give READ teachers a real passion and a realistic picture of the barriers to educational success (Appendix D). Teaching staff participates in state sponsored training events every summer and each new staff member is fully oriented by the Dean of Students into the READ system.

As a school and an agency, READ staff and volunteers make a difference in the lives of adult learners. Each year READ has between 60 and 80 active volunteers who serve as one-on-one tutors, classroom teachers or administrative support. Administrative volunteers are responsible for overseeing the front desk, welcoming all students and visitors, answering individual questions, and answering the telephone. Administrative volunteers also assist tutors and staff with material and classroom preparation. The Dean of Students conducts orientation and training for all new volunteer tutors. Part-time teachers supervise volunteer tutors and classroom teachers, as needed. READ operates under an active and committed Board of Directors (Appendix B) which meets bi-monthly. The board consists of 17 members, four of which represent the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee, which meets every month, directs the operations of READ. Board members represent 3 committees: 1) Strategic Planning, 2) Resource Development and 3) Special Events. Board members, who represent corporate, educational and

non-profit organizations, are selected based on their interest and passion for READ's mission, a variety of skill sets in management, marketing, finance, development, and program design and an ability to give and/or solicit gifts to support the mission and program.

READ has an annual operating budget of \$275,389.00 for fiscal year July 2004 – June 2005. Approximately 1/3 of the budget comes from the State of Tennessee, 1/3 from United Way of Greater Chattanooga's annual allocation and 1/3 from individual donors, foundations and special events.

Both internal, state and federal data collection is an on-going endeavor. Students' academic progress is tracked by the standardized Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) and Basic English Skills Test (BEST). READ's most recent cumulative data is reflected in the 2002-2003 Educational Gains and Attendance by Educational Functioning (Appendix I). In 2003, the 1,041 students enrolled with READ attended 18,624 hours of classes. Of those students, 173 completed one level gain while 121 advanced more than one level.

READ's lead collaborative partner in GED preparation is Chattanooga State Technical Community College (CSTCC). CSTCC defers students to READ whom, after assessment testing, are at the very lowest levels of literacy, and who are not yet candidates for GED preparation. These students require the more intense, personalized educational environment. For 45 years, READ has specialized in smaller classes and one-on-one tutoring. Within a year's enrollment, READ students were nearly 5% more likely than CSTCC students to make an advancement of one or more academic levels, and 42% more likely to remain enrolled at READ if those advancements were not achieved (Appendix I).

Only those enrolled students ages 17 and older who are preparing for the GED are candidates for the State funds that we share in partnership with Chattanooga State. Support for READ students who might otherwise be left behind – those performing at the lowest levels and not eligible for GED preparation – must come from other sources. READ Chattanooga is seeking new and innovative ways to reach out, recruit and education adults needing basic educational skills.

### **7.5.7. Project Description**

The ability to read and understand what you read directly affects your quality of your life, the lives of your loved ones, and the quality of your community. People at the lowest level of literacy cannot locate an intersection on a street map, identify and enter information necessary for applying for a social security card, write a grocery list, read stories to their children, read dosage information on prescriptions and over-the-counter drugs, or fill out an application for employment.

Academic success, as defined by high school graduation, can be predicted with reasonable accuracy by knowing someone's reading skill at the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. A person who is not at least a moderately skilled reader by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade is quite unlikely to graduate from high school (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998). According to the 2004 Reading in Hamilton County report, 835 third graders (29% of 2,875) in the Hamilton County public education system are considered reading deficient based on standardized reading scores. Countywide, approximately 36,650 adults (age 16 and older) are estimated to be at the lowest level of literacy. As defined by the National Adult Literacy Survey, adults at the lowest level of reading are functionally illiterate, reading on a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level or below (SETNIS 2004).

The National Institute for Literacy estimates functional illiteracy costs businesses and taxpayers \$25 billion per year nationally in lost productivity, unrealized tax revenues, welfare payments and crime. Literacy, as defined by the U.S. Congress and the 1991 National Literacy Act, is an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English and solve problems as necessary to function in society, to achieve one's goals and develop one's knowledge and potential. Illiteracy is directly correlated with poverty and educational level. With respect to poverty, Hamilton County communities showing high levels of reading deficiency have a median household income that is not more than \$27,570, 29% lower than the median household income for Hamilton County (SETNIS 2004).

“Economics shape opportunities for parent-infant relationships. Data shows that many of the apparent differences in young children’s social emotional development can be explained by socioeconomic status. Access to financial resources has implications for family functioning and children’s development” (Susman-Stillman & Appleyard, 2003). Reading readiness has been shown to have a high correlation with reading ability: children who lack reading readiness at school entry have a harder time learning to read in the primary grades (Snow, Burns & Griffin 1998). In 2003, twenty-seven percent (27%) of kindergarten students entering Hamilton County public schools were considered not ready-to-learn upon entering kindergarten (SETNIS 2004).

Between 2000-2002, the State of Tennessee reported an average of 3,980 live births in Hamilton County to mothers ranging between the ages of 10 and 49 years. Of those births, 961 (24%) were to mothers who did not finish high school (Appendix I). Of the 961 births, 692 were to unmarried mothers (Appendix I). Fifteen-percent (145) of those babies were low-birth weight babies. Babies born at less than 5 ½ lbs are more likely to be developmentally delayed (Chattanooga-Hamilton Co. Health Council 2003).

The Carnegie Corporation of New York report makes the point that "although children are resilient and can benefit from later intervention, the costs of reversing the effects of a poor start in life increase as a child grows older, and the chances of success diminish." Dr. Arthur Reynolds, a University of Wisconsin researcher, has found that every \$1 spent on high-quality early education programs saves society \$7 in future costs for special education, delinquency, crime control, welfare benefits, lost taxes and other areas.

Outside of high-quality, early childhood education programs, who better to educate a child than an educated parent? Before 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, a child learns to read. After 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, a child reads to learn. If a parent cannot read or understand what they read, are they equipped to prepare their children to enter kindergarten ready to learn and to help them learn to read?

“In order to successfully parent, single mothers seem to need to build strong networks of social support to surround and sustain them. An exploratory study of the dynamics of successful single parenting

(Olson & Haynes, 1993) found that successful single parents were able to maintain positive relationships with their children when they nurtured their own needs through social-support networks. Some studies of single mothers (Simons, Beaman, Conger, and Chao, 1993) show that single mothers with little education tend to have inadequate social-network support, and single mothers under severe economic pressure are more likely to experience negative life events with little social support, resulting in psychological distress and the use of ineffectual parenting practices.” (Susman-Stillman & Appleyard, 2003)

If a primary purpose of literacy education is to eliminate poverty, then literacy programs and practices must be redesigned to fit various conceptions of poverty and its causes (Shannon 1998). Some educators and researchers espouse the notion of critical literacy, the practice of helping learners make sense of what they are learning by grounding it in the context of their daily lives and reflecting on their individual experiences, with an eye toward social action (Corley 2003).

The What to Expect Foundation (WTEF) ([www.whattoexpect.org](http://www.whattoexpect.org)) in New York City, NY is a non-profit which takes its name from the best-selling pregnancy guide “What to Expect When You’re Expecting.” The WTEF developed a NYC Baby Basics Initiative which is a community-wide prenatal “health literacy” program providing at-risk expecting families with comprehensive prenatal education and health literacy. The cornerstone of the program is BABY BASICS: Your Month By Month Guide To A Healthy Pregnancy), a much-lauded, extensively researched, innovative health literacy tool that is written to a 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade level: available in English and in Spanish (Appendix I).

The WTEF coordinates services among providers and mothers, community-based organizations, adult literacy and ESL providers. The initiative’s ultimate goal is to empower pregnant women to access, act upon and understand healthcare information, have a healthier pregnancy outcome, and be better able to provide a healthier future for their children. The WTEF has committed to READ Chattanooga a \$9,000 start-up grant of materials, curriculum and technical assistance to implement the Baby Basics program in Hamilton County (Appendix E).

The WTEF grant will include BABY BASICS: Your Month By Month Guide To A Healthy Pregnancy for 200 under-educated pregnant women; the Baby Basics curriculum in English and Spanish, along with a CD and the rights to copy; and 20 hours of technical assistance to support READ in the successful implementation of the Baby Basics program.

READ's goal is to implement Baby Basics into the ABE curriculum, using a woman's pregnancy as the incentive to seek further education, by enrolling 1,000 under-educated pregnant women in an ABE health literacy class. In a 3 year study, READ plans to show that prenatal health literacy encourages pregnant women to seek additional ABE classes, GED pre-testing and GED prep classes; therefore improving their basic educational skills and further impacting their future economic status. Adult educators can teach literacy by 1) connecting learning to learners lived experiences; 2) helping learners question theory relative to their own cultural experiences; and 3) giving learners the tools to critique frames of reference, ideas, information, and patterns of privilege (Freire & Maced 1987).

Health literacy, defined by Healthy People 2010 as "the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions," is a problem of both communication and comprehension. Low-income and immigrant mothers who need health literacy information the most are the least likely to receive it. Many lack the financial resources to purchase pregnancy books, and many lack the literacy and language skills necessary to read and understand them. Inadequate and inappropriate use of available services is not due to lack of interest. Once expecting mothers are given access to information in an understandable format, they are invariably eager for more. Providing enticing educational materials and the support needed to read and act upon these materials through health literacy classes makes sense. The Baby Basics program confronts these health literacy concerns at the patient, provider and community level. Participants in the Baby Basics program will receive their own copy of BABY BASICS: Your Month to Month Guide to a Healthy Pregnancy and will participate in weekly health literacy classes led by trained teachers. Dialogue



between teacher and learner is important to helping learners see the links among literacy, context, and meaning (Shore 1998).

The WTEF staff will train the Executive Director, Dean of Students and two part-time teachers as Health Literacy Instructors using the Baby Basics curriculum. Salary for two part-time Health Literacy Instructors for year one is \$12,960 (48 weeks x \$15 x 18 hours) and year two is \$13,392 (48 weeks x \$15.5 x 18 hours) and year three is \$13,824 (48 weeks x \$16 x 18 hours). The 2005-2007 total salary cost for the Health Literacy Instructors is \$39,736. Through the Osborne Fund of The Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga has committed \$13,000 for one year of salaries to implement the Baby Basics program (Appendix E).

Under the direct supervision of the Executive Director, the Dean of Students will oversee the development and coordination of the Baby Basics program within our community. The Dean of Students is responsible for incorporating the health literacy classes into READ's ABE curriculum. The part-time Health Literacy Instructors will attend weekly teacher meetings with all READ Staff. Using Baby Basics, Health Literacy Instructors and ABE teachers will develop individualized health literacy goals to meet the needs of each pregnant woman after reviewing their TABE results. Additional READ staff will spend time coordinating and tracking neighborhood classroom data. READ's Director of Administration will devote nine hours per week, or 24% of her office time, to maintain records and databases relevant to the Baby Basics program. This reflects an average cost of \$129 per week (\$6,192 annually) and will be incurred through READ's current budget.

While READ serves all of Hamilton County through our 17 room school in Brainerd, a neighborhood classroom was recently established in partnership with East Lake Courts and the Salvation Army, as a READ site in the East Lake/Clifton Hills Community #30 (SETNIS 2004). The Reading in Hamilton County Report states that community #30 is comprised of 8,619 residents, 7% of which are Hispanic. The average income is \$20,855, 46% lower than the median household income for Hamilton

County. Of the 6,205 adults over the age of 18 in this community, 39% have no High School Diploma or GED. It is estimated that 35% of adults have a reading deficiency; 61% of the kindergartners entering Hamilton County public schools were not ready-to-learn; and 58% of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders and 56% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders are not reading at grade level.

In Community #30, between September 2003 and 2004, READ served 55 adults with ABE and pre-GED classes and 20 with ESL classes. Twenty children participated in a READ Family Literacy program in Summer 2004 at East Lake Courts. READ is in the process of building a third classroom in the Temple of Faith Deliverance Church of God in Christ's Learning Center. Each organization whose space READ uses for neighborhood classrooms provides adequate and appropriate facilities for instruction at no cost to READ. The classrooms are, however, only marginally outfitted. A private donor has pledged to give READ \$2,500.00 for neighborhood classrooms in 2005 (Appendix E).

Essentially, the neighborhood classroom acts as a one-room drop in school. The rationale for this style of instruction is that no two students have the same academic needs. Using the TABE, every student is tested to determine basic reading and math levels. Individual study plans will be developed based on the pregnant woman's reading skill levels and need for additional help with reading and comprehension skills. Everyone works independently with teacher assistance in order to help students move forward as quickly as their own abilities and background knowledge allows. Students study materials based on test results and subjective observation by the teacher. READ staff will implement Baby Basics in Community #30 to assist under-educated pregnant women.

Fathers-to-be will also be invited to attend classes with the mothers. READ will partner with the First Things First Urban Initiative to identify fathers-to-be as another means to reach out and identify under-educated mothers-to-be, as well as mothers and fathers needing ABE, GED or ESL classes (Appendix G).

First year identified partners agreeing to identify and refer under-educated mothers into Baby Basics, as well as incorporate Baby Basics into their curriculums and classes are the Erlanger/T.C.

Thompson Safe & Sound prenatal program (Appendix F), and the Chattanooga Room in the Inn Life Skills program (Appendix F)

The Regional Obstetrical Consultants Maternal Fetal Medicine Program and High Risk OB Clinic (Appendix G) and Erlanger's Women's and Infants' Services (Appendix G) will support READ through referrals.

Health Literacy classes will be available at READ's Brainerd school and within the Hamilton County community. To implement the Baby Basics curriculum in the neighborhood classroom, the Chattanooga Housing Authority and East Lake Courts have agreed to partner with READ by provide classroom space at no cost to READ (Appendix F).

As defined by The What To Expect Foundation's Baby Basic program and curriculum, READ will measure success by evaluating the following processes and outcomes. Chattanooga's results will be cumulated with other Baby Basic Programs around the country by reporting Best Practices to the WTEF.

#### Processes

1. Number of linkages with community resources referring under-educated mothers.
2. Number of Baby Basics/Hola Bebe books distributed.
3. Student Satisfaction (as measured by surveys).

#### Outcomes

1. Number of under-educated pregnant women having a healthy pregnancy and birth.
2. Number of new mom's seeking additional ABE and ESL classes.
3. Number of new mom's advancing one or more grade level within 6 months of regular attendance.
4. Number of new mom's pre-testing for the GED
5. Number of new mom's enrolled in GED prep classes.
6. Number of new mom's receiving GED.
7. Personal goals of the students are met with significant progress.

Short-term outcomes are to increase the time parents spend reading about and understanding their pregnancy so that they can have a chance at a healthy pregnancy therefore giving their baby a good start in life. With the successful implementation of the Baby Basics program in Chattanooga, READ intends to prove that prenatal health literacy encourages under-educated pregnant women to seek further ABE classes, GED pre-testing and GED prep classes, leading them to take the GED, and further effecting their future economic status.

The Students' academic progress is tracked by the standardized Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) and Basic English Skills Test (BEST). Results will be reported quarterly to funding partners. READ will provide outcome-based individual and community-wide success stories to the City of Chattanooga, United Way of Greater Chattanooga, and the Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga, as well as board member, individual donors and community partners.

### 7.5.8. Project Plan

#### Timeline:

The What To Expect Foundation will train the Executive Director, Dean of Students and 2 part-time teachers.

January 2005	What To Expect Foundation (WTEF) will deliver materials. WTEF to train Executive Director and Dean of Students READ to hire 2 part-time Health Literacy Instructors Community partners and READ determine class needs and referrals
February 2005	Dean of Students trains Instructors in collaboration with The WTEF. READ to Incorporate Baby Basics into ABE curriculum Partners and Staff begin recruiting mother's-to-be. READ begins TABE testing.
March 2005 and on-going	Community Partners sign Memos of Understanding Instructors implement Baby Basics curriculum
June 2005 and quarterly	READ to administer 1 <sup>st</sup> follow-up TABE (repeated every 12 weeks)
July 2005 and quarterly	Director of Administration to provide data reports Dean of Students provides program report Executive Director reviews data and program reports to determine future program implementation Director of Development to gather success stories to share with funding partners and the community

Expenses	2005-2007 Budgeted Amount	In-Kind Value or Cash Match	Request for funding from Chattanooga Invest	2005-2007 Expense to READ
----------	---------------------------------	-----------------------------------	--	---------------------------------

\_\_\_\_\_



### **7.5.9. Appendices (Attachments)**

- A. Executive Director's Resume'
- B. 2004-2005 Board of Directors
- C. READ Organizational Chart
- D. Director of Administration Resume' (Barbara Dempsey)  
Director of Development Resume' (Susannah Murdock)  
Dean of Students Resume' (Tracy Steen)  
Example of a READ Teacher's Qualifications (Marion Pound – part-time ABE/GED teacher)
- E. Letter of Commitment from The What To Expect Foundation  
Letter of Commitment from the Osborne Fund of The Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga's  
Letter of Commitment between the READ Board and Executive Director and Mr. and Mrs. Olan Mills
- F. Letter of Agreement from the T.C.Thompson Children's Hospital Safe & Sound program  
Letter of Agreement from the Chattanooga Room in The Inn Life Skills Program  
Letter of Agreement from the Chattanooga Housing Authority and East Lake Courts
- G. Letter of Support from First Things First Urban Initiative  
Letter of Support from Erlanger's Regional Obstetrical Consultants Maternal Fetal Medicine Program  
and High Risk OB Clinic  
Letter of Support from Erlanger's Women and Infant Services
- H. None applicable



## I. READ Brochure

READ's 2003-2005 Strategic Plan

Community Partners

2002-2003 Educational Gains and Attendance

2002-2003 READ and Chattanooga State Comparison of Educational Gains

Percent of Selected Births with Low Weight by Maternal Education

Percent of Selected Births with Low Weight by Maternal Education and Marital Status

BABY BASICS: Your Month to Month Guide to a Healthy Pregnancy

## REFERENCES:

Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Health Council. *Leading the Nation in Low Birth Weight Babies.*

Volume 1, Issue 3. December 2003.

Corley, Mary Ann. *Poverty, Racism, and Literacy.* Eric Digest, no. 243, Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, 2003.

Freire, P., and Macedo, D. *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World.* South Hadley, MA: Bergin and Garvey, 1987.

Olson, M.R., & Haynes, J.A. (1993). Successful single parents. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, 74, 259-67.

Shannon, P. *Reading Poverty.* Westport, CT: Heinemann, 1998.

Shore, S. "What's Whiteness Go to Do with It?" In *Literacy on the Line*, edited by S.Shore. Underdale, Australia: University of South Australia, 1998. (ED 430 143)

Simons, R.L., Beaman, J., Conger, R.D., & Chao, W. (1993). Stress, support, and antisocial behavior trait as determinants of emotional well being and parenting practices among single mothers. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*. 55, 385-98.

Snow, Catherine E. Burns, Susan & Griffin, Peg (1998). Preventing reading difficulties in young children. *National Research Council*.

Southeast TN Information Service (SETNIS). 2004 Reading in Hamilton County. Community Research Council. Pp.1-5, 39, 68.

Susman-Stillman, Amy, PhD and Appleyard, Karen, MSW. (January 2003), For Better or Worse: An Ecological Perspective on Parents' Relationships and Parent-Infant Interaction, *Zero to Three*, pp. 9-10.